

REMARKS

Claims 25-48 are pending within this application. No Claims have been added or canceled. Claims 25-27 and 45-48 have been amended.

The new claims include limitations that are taught throughout the originally filed specification, as well as within the examples. The treatment possibilities are taught throughout the specification, thus permitting the removal of the broad, nonspecific term "mechanically". No new matter has been added. Entry and due consideration thereof are therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office's enablement and/or indefiniteness rejections have been overcome with the amendments above and are now moot. Contrary to the position of the Office, Applicants do submit that the woven structure of the subject fabric, treated accordingly (immobilization followed by nicking), exhibits the required limitations and such would not be possible by any other treatment. Basically, the warp yarns, being immobilized and then treated exhibit greater loss of strength than do the fill yarns during such a procedure. In general mechanical treatments within immobilization, etc., the warp and fill yarns are treated essentially to the same degree; during immobilization the fill yarns are protected to a much greater degree. Thus, the surface of the fabric exhibits a softer hand than an untreated surface, but the fabric also exhibits the balanced fabric strength characteristics and, if desired, reduced pilling results, due to the protection accorded the fill yarns of the subject woven fabric during treatment. Thus, it is evident that full enablement and definiteness have actually been provided through

Applicant's disclosure and claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of all such bases of rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Office has also rejected Claims 25-30, 33, 34, 37, 38, 41, 42, and 45-48 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Otto, as well as Claims 25-48 under the same bases over Willbanks, and further Claims 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 43, and 44 as obvious in view of the same Otto reference noted above. Applicants respectfully disagree with these rejections simply because, contrary to the Office's position, the claimed fabrics are immobilized and then abraded, sanded, or sueded, in order to provide a softer hand fabric with improved fill tensile strength retention. Otto merely teaches the sanding of a fabric with repeated sandpaper treatments. The fibers of Otto's are pulled from the surface, and the warp and fill yarns are both roughly treated within such a sanding procedure. The fill yarn tensile strength of Otto's treated fabrics is thus reduced at a much greater level than that now claimed. As discussed within the original specification, particularly at page 8, from the first line to the next page, the immobilized fabrics are like films wherein the fibers therein are not pulled away, but are individually nicked (as long as they are contacted with the sander, abrader, and/or sueder). Such immobilization, and thus nicking of the yarns and fibers permits the high fill tensile strength retention levels of the present claims. It is thus evident that Otto fails to teach or fairly suggest the nicked appearances and thus high fill tensile strength retention levels since he is limited to the aforementioned straightforward sanding procedures without any immobilization or otherwise fabric/film-production steps required to achieve the instantly claimed fabrics.

Likewise, the rejections of all of the claims in view of Willbanks are improper for much the same reasons. Willbanks teaches hydroentanglement, wherein the target fabrics are treated with high pressure water to produce a napped surface. Nicking, and thus, high tensile strength retention levels, are unavailable with such a procedure, most notably because any type of immobilization of fibers needed to impart the required nicked appearances would be nonexistent within a water-based treatment system. Size would wash away, as would ice. Yarn and/or fiber nicking requires actual contact with a hard surface. Hydroentanglement merely pulls (and/or pushes) surface fibers out of a fabric to form, as in Otto, a napped surface. No nicking is possible. In addition, the ability for water to penetrate different portions of the target fabric would result in greater degrees of treating fill yarns such that they would be weakened as well, resulting in a greater reduction in fill tensile strength level than is instantly claimed. Lastly, both references would exhibit napped pile fabrics, as opposed to nicked fiber surfaces, and thus would inherently exhibit greater pilling characteristics than the nicked fiber inventive fabrics. These are thus improper references, particularly in view of the amendments above. Reconsideration and withdrawal thereof are thus earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

In view of all of the previous amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance and it is requested that this application be passed on to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

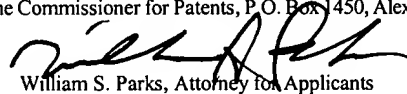
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